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ALFRED B. McCALMONT.

GENERAL ALFRED BRUNSON McCALMONT, the third son of Alexander and Eliza H. McCalmont, was born at Franklin, Venango County, Pennsylvania, on April 28, 1825, and died at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 7, 1874. His father, Alexander McCalmont, the son of John and Elizabeth McCalmont, was born in Cistacoquillos Valley, now in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, in 1785. When he was two years old the family removed to Nittany Valley, Centre County (1787) and thence to Venango County, Pennsylvania, in 1803. John McCalmont, the father of Alexander and grandfather of Alfred Brunson, was born in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1750. When sixteen years old (1766) he came to Philadelphia with his elder half brother Thomas. Near Philadelphia they remained for some years; each married and had children, and both families moved towards the west, Thomas with his, remaining in Penris Valley, Centre County, and John with his, locating in Venango County. Both Thomas and John were Presbyterians in faith, and the names of most of their children, who generally attained a good old age, can be found in the records

of that church in Centre and Venango Counties. The earliest McCalmont, whose history has been hunted up was a Scotchman, a Covenanter preacher, who migrated from Scotland to the North of Ireland in the time of King Charles the First. From this McCalmont many families of that name in Ireland, England and America have descended. It is supposed that the name Calmont or Almont is of French origin, and that the patronymic McCalmont was made by the prefix of Mac, common at one time in Scotland to designate the sons of a particular clan. It is not easy, in the space allotted to a brief sketch, to do justice to the life of Alfred Brunson McCalmont. As, in many other cases, the danger is, that by condensing and avoiding details, important facts will be omitted, and unimportant reflections will take their place. It will perhaps be admitted by all who were well acquainted with him in his lifetime, that, from his earliest boyhood up to the day of his decease, he occupied a conspicuous place among his fellows, and was esteemed for his honesty, sincerity, truthfulness and constancy in friendship, as well as for his wit, learning, elocution, courage and honor. From childhood he evinced a disposition to learn, and was active and industrious in the pursuit of knowledge. And this may be regarded as somewhat peculiar in his case, for he was very social in his disposition, and had a more than common sense of the humorous and the ludicrous. In his early years his instruction and deportment were very carefully attended to; and at the age of eleven or twelve he went to the Latin school kept by Rev. N. R. Snowden. This was about the time that Mr. Snowden, who instructed many Franklin boys in the rudiments of Latin, and exercises of declamation, ceased to teach, and gave way to Mr. Gamble, a fine Latin scholar who, for awhile, succeeded him. At Mr. Snowden's school, among other companions of McCalmont, his most intimate one perhaps, was a scholar equally as bright, Jesse Lee Reno—who afterwards graduated at West Point, became distinguished in Mexico, as a Lieutenant of Ordnance, was in the Government survey of the Pacific Railroad; and at last, with the rank of Major-General, laid down his life for his country at South Mountain. In 1839 Mr. McCalmont entered Allegheny College. He remained there only a few sessions; and in the autumn of 1840 he entered Dickinson College, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he at once took rank in the foremost of his class, dividing the honors with another classmate at graduation in 1844. Mr. McCalmont then commenced the study of law in the office of his brother-in-law, Edwin C. Wilson, at Franklin, Pennsylvania, under the supervision of his father, Alexander McCal-

mont, who was then President-Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial District, but who still retained his residence at Franklin, although at that time it was not within the bounds of his district. In April, 1845, Thomas S. Espy, then a promising lawyer of Franklin, removed with his family to Iowa. At his solicitation Alfred Brunson McCalmont went with him. After being a short time in Iowa, Mr. McCalmont concluded that he would not remain, and set out for his home by way of St. Louis. To get the means to prosecute his journey, he taught school for some months at St. Charles, Missouri, until the spring of 1846, when he returned to his native village, Franklin. His letters to his father and family during this period were very entertaining; full of his trials as a pedagogue, and sparkling with humorous touches, very graphically written. In fact, when he had leisure, he displayed in his conversation and correspondence his humorous inclination to the best, nor did he ever cease to take pleasure in reading the works of humorous authors, as Dickens, Thackeray and the like. It would be, however, a mistake to suppose that most of his time was taken up with light reading or social conversation. On the contrary, he was a very close and thorough student, not content until he had mastered any subject which he undertook, whether in law or other science. His transient companions, who saw him only in his hours of recreation, and observed his good humor, and sallies of wit in conversation, got mostly but a slight perception of the strength of his character for thorough research and profound meditation which distinguished him in his professional duties. He was extremely modest and diffident in alluding to his own merits. He was admitted to the bar in Venango County in 1847, and then, at the suggestion of his brother John, went to Reading, Pennsylvania, with a view to locating there; but soon discovering that there was not sufficient promise of a practice there, inasmuch as he was unacquainted with the Dutch language, he took the advice of Judge Burnside, and removed his office to Pittsburgh. There he had, as every beginner at the bar has in a strange city, a hard time of patient waiting and solicitude as to his future success and support. Gradually as his merits became known he acquired considerable practice; conducting with ability his cases, clearing now and then by his advocacy some prisoner in the Criminal Court; or gaining here and there, by his careful preparation, causes in the Common Pleas or Supreme Court. But the business was not enough for his active temperament. He wanted to be occupied continually. He seemed to fret at the slowness of clients, and the smallness of fees. In fact,

his generosity and love of good cheer were so marked, that he was scarcely prepared to gnaw the crusts or subsist on the crumbs of the profession for many years. He assisted his friend Keenan, who was at college with him, in editing the *Legal Journal*, and also the *Daily Union*, a Democratic journal. He was a Democrat. But he had located in a Whig or Republican city. It is evident that his true policy would have been to stick to law, and let politics alone. He seems to have been of that opinion himself at times. But he was considered a good stump speaker. As such he was very popular in his native county, and he could not well resist the importunities of his friends to help the party, by his voice, as well as his vote, in election times. In these years he formed an agreeable acquaintance with Miss Sarah Frances Evans, the granddaughter of Mrs. Sarah Collins (with whom Miss Evans lived, her parents being deceased), at whose commodious and hospitable mansion, near the city, the best of society loved to meet. The acquaintance in time ripened into an engagement, and resulted in a matrimonial alliance. The wedding took place in Trinity Church, Pittsburgh, April 28, 1853. From that time, till the day of his death, Mr. McCalmont was perfectly happy in his domestic relations, and enjoyed intensely the society of his wife and children and home. His arguments in court, as well as his editorials in the *Legal Journal* and *Daily Union* brought him to the attention of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and he was appointed Prothonotary. Afterwards Judge Jeremiah S. Black, who had been appointed Attorney-General by President Buchanan, offered Mr. McCalmont, in 1858, the appointment as Chief Clerk, with the assurance that when the office of Assistant Attorney-General should be created by Congress, he should receive that appointment. Under this view he accepted the office, and became the first of the Assistants to the Attorney-General. At the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration, when the Democratic party had been disrupted, and the Union threatened with a like fate, Mr. McCalmont, in resigning his office under the new administration, retired to his native town, Franklin, where he entered into partnership with James K. Kerr, in the practice of law; but soon catching the spirit of the Union music and determining to keep step to it, in spite of former affiliations or antipathies, he, in conjunction with William Hasson and George R. Snowden, raised a company of volunteers. It became a part of the One hundred and Forty-second Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers in the Union Army, of which Mr. McCalmont was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel. The history of its participation in many

battles which the Army of the Potomac fought, can be found in many records, and its hard fighting and terrible losses are engraven on many tombs. The regiment was so reduced by casualties in battle and on the march, that not enough men were left for a battalion. The War Department failed to give orders to recruit it. New regiments were forming in Pennsylvania, and Mr. McCalmont was offered and accepted the Colonelcy of the Two hundred and Eighth Regiment. It immediately joined the Army of the Potomac, and continued with it, in General Hartranft's Division, to the close of the war. For his services Col. McCalmont received the brevet of Brigadier-General, by the title of which he was subsequently known. He participated with his regiment, or the remnant of it, in the grand parade in May, 1865, when the veteran troops marched in their last review before President Johnson and Cabinet at Washington, preparatory to their final muster out of the service. General McCalmont (now brevetted) then returned to his wife and children at Franklin, Pennsylvania, and again resumed his profession. He soon acquired a large and lucrative practice at the bar. He was a candidate for Congress in 1866, but was defeated. And in 1872 he was strongly recommended as a candidate for Governor on the Democratic ticket. But he must have been aware that he was on the wrong party ticket for success, however deserving of it he might have been. His friends saw, however, that his success at the bar was assured, and looked forward to further honors for him; but about 1872 a small tumor appeared on his cheek, near the ear. It gave him much concern, especially when it began to suppurate. In the winter of 1873 it appeared to be healing, but in the spring of 1874 it again presented an angry appearance, and General McCalmont determined to have it removed by a surgical operation. In the meantime he had been selected as Orator for the occasion of the annual reunion of the Army of the Potomac in May, 1874. He much appreciated the honor, and was anxious to perform the duty. In April he visited Philadelphia, and there, at the Girard House, whilst engaged in writing his address, he consulted Dr. Joseph Pancoast, who with his son William, both eminent surgeons, performed the operation of removing the tumor. It created but little pain, and seemed simple, healing easily; but on the second or third day after the operation, symptoms of malignant erysipelas set in, and so rapidly affected the head and brain that the physicians had from its onset but little if any hope. They did all that medical skill could do, but without avail, and in a week's time, on Wednesday afternoon the 7th day of May, 1874, General McCalmont,

in the presence of his devoted wife, brother, nephews and other kind friends, breathed his last. His remains, carefully and tenderly guarded, were conveyed to his home, where, on Sunday the 10th of May, after appropriate services in the Episcopal Church, they were followed to the tomb, in the Franklin Cemetery, by a very large company of his comrades in arms, legal brothers, fellow-citizens, neighbors and sympathizing friends.
